

Toyohiro Akiyama, first Japanese citizen and journalist in space, dies at 84

The first Japanese citizen to launch into space, Toyohiro Akiyama was also the first commercially sponsored cosmonaut and the world's first journalist to file reports while on a spaceflight.

Akiyama, 84, died last Wednesday, August 26, of lower gastrointestinal bleeding, news agencies in Japan reported. A funeral was held with his close relatives in attendance.

As a correspondent for the Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS), Akiyama was chosen out of his 162 fellow employees who applied to fly to space in celebration of the network's 40th anniversary. He trained at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, located outside of Moscow, and was assigned to the Soyuz TM-11 crew.

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